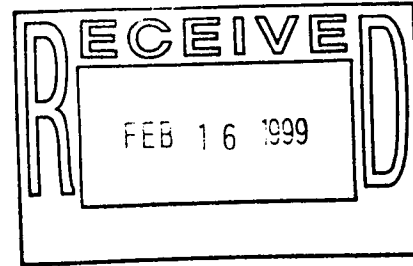


FREE THE GRAPES!

TO ENSURE CONSUMER ACCESS TO FINE WINE



FOUNDING ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN
VINTNERS
ASSOCIATION

QUALITY FOR
FREE TRADE IN
LICENSED
BEVERAGES

FAMILY
WINEMAKERS
OF CALIFORNIA

NAPA VALLEY
VINTNERS
ASSOCIATION

WINE INSTITUTE

February 12, 1999

Dr. Larry Hart
Board Executive Secretary
National Toxicology Program
HHS
Via Fax

Dear Dr. Hart,

Our organization seeks solutions to the problems adult consumers face in purchasing wines not generally available in their market. A national wine war is pitting consumers—who want wineries to ship directly to them—against wine wholesalers, who are threatening winemakers with jail time if they bypass the middlemen. Our membership is composed of over 140,000 adult wine drinkers in the U.S., and the founding wine industry organizations at left.

I was very concerned to hear of a pending proposal that would list wine, beer and spirits as "known human carcinogens." This proposal seems to disregard mounting scientific evidence that supports (especially) wine's contribution to a healthy diet and lifestyle. This evidence was certainly considered by the Department of Treasury who just this week announced that it would allow wineries to include a label on their bottles which would direct consumers to consult our government's published Dietary Guidelines. This proposal, and its timing, smacks of the efforts of those who seek to confuse the public about wine, beer and spirits. I hope your goal is not the same.

I implore you to consider *all* the scientific evidence, to not be swayed by the inflated rhetoric of those who would prefer we return to Prohibition, and to simply trust the American people to make their own best judgements about alcohol consumption—both risks and benefits.

Sincerely,


Jeremy Benson, Executive Director